

**An Idea
That Saved a Business**

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By
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The Idea

THE General Manager of a large Department Store sat in his study one night, puffing away at a big black cigar, with a real worried expression upon his face. Things were not right down at the Store.

Two months previous he had accepted the position as General Manager, and it had been gradually dawning upon him that he was waging a losing fight. The Store had an equipment and overhead based upon a total annual

business of seven million dollars and was barely doing four.

For days he had been reviewing his Organization; the activities of his competitors, the possibilities of the City itself, the opportunities for the elimination of expense that might serve to reduce the over-head. It was a brain racking circle of thoughts and figures that seemed to lead nowhere but back to the starting point.

Sitting in his Study he tried his best to find a solution of the ever-increasing problem. Musing upon the situation aloud he said, "boiled down to a single sentence the problem seems to be this—how am I going to get the greatest

amount of money in the shortest possible time?" The next thought was "to whom shall I look as an example of how that can be accomplished—who gets the greatest amount of money in the shortest possible time?" Suddenly he sat up as the thought struck him forcibly—"why, it's the Circus that in the shortest space of time produces the greatest result."

He couldn't shake the idea and the next morning he had determined that he would seek out the General Manager of the largest Circus Company traveling the Country and ask him to what it was they attributed their success.

The General Manager was a man who, like most true Executives, acts on impulse, and he made up his mind that he would take the first train to where the Circus was showing and talk with its General Manager.

Fortunately the Circus was then located in a City about one hundred miles distant, and the General Manager made the trip.

In conference with the Circus man the next day he told him what he had in mind. "You folks," he said, "it seems to me, more than any other business, get the greatest amount of money in the shortest possible time—how do you do it?"

The Circus man laughed. "It is more simple than you think," he said. "We simply are most careful students of advertising; we plan and place our advertising so that ALL THE PEOPLE know when we shall arrive and how long we shall stay. We have found that some people read the newspapers, a great number; and some ride in Street Cars, quite a few; but that ALL PEOPLE who can come to our Circus use the great outdoors. Therefore, we spend eighty per cent. of the money we have for advertising, outdoors. By the use of outdoor publicity we get our greatest 'punch.' The Poster offers a use

of color and size that dominates, and the eye cannot escape it. Then we so build our copy that 'he who runs is compelled to read.' We are specialists in evolving compelling copy—we are psychologists who have accurately gauged the public's mind. We cater to the great masses, rich and poor alike. We must understand humanity in its entirety. So we use the Poster and painted signs—we tell our message in color and size and we reiterate it on every Highway and Byway until you cannot escape the message of the Circus and its appeal."

The two men talked for a number of hours, and finally the Gen-

eral Manager said, "if your plan is a success for the Circus, why not for some other business? Is there any particular reason why your method can only be successful for a Circus Company?"

"No," said the Circus man, "I think the method itself is sound and would, to a large degree, prove efficient for mostly any business, if as carefully planned as ours."

The General Manager of the large Department Store, riding back to his City, thought over all that the Circus man had told him, and this one thought persisted in his mind—"Why not for the Department Store?"

Next day he laid plans for an Outdoor Advertising Campaign. He called in his Advertising Manager and a Representative of the Outdoor Advertising Company of his City, and said to them, "I want to place outdoor advertisements so that, no matter where you stand on any widely traveled avenue in this City at any point of circulation, you will be greeted by a dominant reminder of our Store. I am going to make this Institution *synonymous* with *shopping*. I am going to so constantly reiterate that message, and I intend to do it in so attractive a way and with such compelling copy that the public will be unconsciously at-

tracted to us in larger numbers than ever before. I am going to inaugurate within such changes as will make OURS the finest place to shop, rendering unquestionable service and having a 'come again' atmosphere about it; and I will look to the outdoor advertising that we will do to help build for us this prestige that, to my mind, is so necessary for an Institution such as ours."

The General Manager was an enthusiast not given to half measures—one of those leaders of men who act instinctively and is nine-tenths right.

He said to the Advertising Manager, "I have set a figure of

twenty thousand dollars as my limit for this Outdoor Campaign, and I want you to buy the most dominant Outdoor Display that was ever planned in this City. I want to go over every bit of the copy with you before it is finally executed, and I want the copy changed every month with a complete re-arrangement of both color scheme and message. I want to make, as I stated before, *our Institution synonymous with shopping.*”

Seven years have gone by, and the General Manager is President of his Company, which is now doing some twelve million dollars' worth of business yearly.

No, the increase of eight million dollars in their business is not due entirely to this wonderful Outdoor Campaign that was put forth. The untiring energy of the General Manager, his far-sightedness and ability in re-organizing his Institution, have all gone to make this Department Store the wonderful business it is. It is significant that today his Company is still spending eighteen thousand dollars per year for Outdoor Advertising.

The General Manager said to me the other day, "I believe in our Outdoor Advertising because I have proven its value. It tells my message *to all the people*: To

the Foreigners and the Illiterates who cannot read the newspapers and have money to spend, and who can absorb a simple message told to them pictorially and in large size and color—to the *school girl who is the mother of tomorrow*, and to the busy man who rides in his motor car to and from his factory and glances only occasionally at his newspaper.

“Mind you I hold no brief for Outdoor Advertising alone—I am a consistent user of newspaper space, probably the largest in this City today, but I attribute the first growth and stimulus of our business to the wide-spreading use I made of Outdoor Publicity.”

“I do not believe that a Department Store can be successfully advertised by Outdoor Advertising alone, any more than I believe it can be most successfully advertised by newspaper advertising alone. I believe that a Department Store is best served by a judicious combination of both.”

This General Manager, as I said before, is President of his Institution today, one of the wisest men in the Department Store field in America.

And the best part of this Story is that it is *absolutely true* and was told to the writer almost as set down.

NOTE

Our organization has the advantage of a merchandising experience covering a period of 40 years. We have served clients who have grown from infant industry to corporations doing fifty million dollars or more per year.

We have carefully collected and compiled sales and advertising data, a great deal of which is applicable to all business.

We have a sane, workable plan we should like to present to you.

UNITED ADVERTISING CORPORATION.



United Advertising Corporation

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Alfred V. Van Beuren, *Secretary-Treasurer*

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*Throughout the United States
and Canada*

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New Haven Sign Co.	<i>New Haven, Conn.</i>
Bridgeport Outdoor Advertising Co.,	<i>Bridgeport, Conn.</i>
Van Beuren & N. Y. Bill Posting Co.,	<i>New York, N. Y.</i>
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Dallas Poster Advertising Co.	<i>Dallas, Tex.</i>
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